

Memorial Remarks

Sally Lilienthal

We had no idea that Owen Chamberlain was a Nobel laureate when he became a founding member of the Ploughshares board almost 25 year ago. We did know that we needed a physicist for technical understanding and we knew of his personal commitment to the abolishment of nuclear weapons. It was a perfect fit. His wisdom helped to guide our grant-making from the very first years while he pointed the way to help us launch the careers of the most influential scientists dealing with what he called the “abomination of nuclear proliferation.” He strengthened our mission with his many articles and public speeches on the subject, including those he made to meetings of Nobel laureates encouraging them to join in his crusade. I remember his impassioned pleas that the United States support the Comprehensive Test Ban and his vigorous encouragement for an unorthodox grant from Ploughshares to support a joint Soviet-American plan for on-site verification of nuclear testing. The evidence turned out to provide a seminal step toward the ratification of the Test Ban. Then years later when his debilitating illness kept him from coming to Ploughshares board meetings, Owen kept in touch by telephone and then by letter and year after year his wonderful wife always helped him come to our annual public get-together, as she did a few months ago.

His legacy to Ploughshares is our commitment to carry on his work with our resources and our determination and with our gratitude for his living inspiration.